

THE CINEMATHEQUE

The regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde films. Shows on Thursdays and Sundays at 8:00 PM at the San Francisco Art Institute, 800 Chestnut St., S.F. Donation \$2. Free coffee. For information call 586-8486.

THURSDAY, MARCH 23

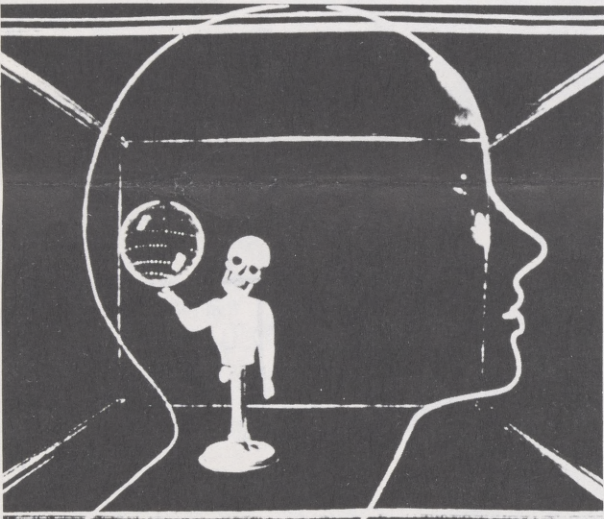
The Films of Pat O'Neill

PAT O'NEILL IN PERSON

Many times winner of film festivals across the country including the ever popular Ann Arbor film festival, his films have shown here many times throughout the years. "His strong suit is not giving substance to elegant, preconceived notions (about film)...but achieving a formal accommodation of disparate elements and extracting from them a sometimes recondite meaning through processes of addition, modification, rearrangement and horse sense, which means keeping an eye out for good good fortune and having the technical facility to exploit it..."

His work is in an exact sense experimental. He is a tinker, a cracker-jack model builder, a conjoiner (and hence a rather literal surrealist). He is a prospector, who assays each film stock, and a magician and paradoxist whose wand is the optical printer and whose witchery, a ambiguities, contradictions, and perplexities delight his audiences while while they reveal "the qualities hidden within the film image." His images are not so much complex and multi-layered as they are versatile, like the man; he's the proverbial celebrant who jumped on his horse and galloped off in all directions." -- Mitch Tuchman, Film Comment

Our program will include: SIDEWINDER'S DELTA (76) 20min, SAUGUS SERIES (74) 16min, DOWN WIND (73) 15min, TWO SWEEPS (excerpt) (77) 10min, plus an added work in progress, 15min.



Harry Smith: 'Heaven and Earth Magic Feature'

SUNDAY, MARCH 26

HEAVEN AND EARTH MAGIC

AND TWO FILMS BY ROBERT BREER

"For 30 years Harry Smith worked on these movies, secretly, like an alchemist, and he worked out his own formulas and mixtures to produce these fantastic images...you can watch them for motion - Harry Smith's films never stop moving; or you can watch them for hidden and symbolic meanings, alchemic signs. There are more levels in Harry Smith's work than in any other film animator I know. Animated cinema - all those Czechs, and Poles, and Yugoslavs, and Pintoffs, and Bosutos and Hubleys are nothing but makers of cute cartoons. Harry Smith is the only serious film animator working today."

-- Jonas Mekas

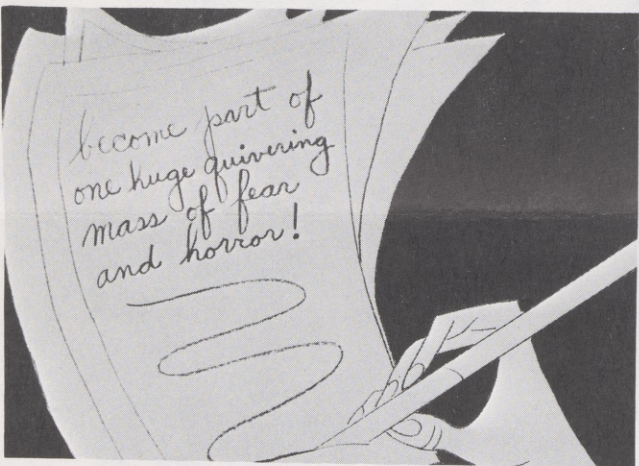
"The first part depicts the heroine's toothache consequent to the loss of a very valuable watermelon, her dentistry and transportation to heaven. Next follows an elaborate exposition of the heavenly land in terms of Israel, Montreal and the second part depicts the return to earth from being eaten by Max Muller on the day Edward the Seventh dedicated the Great Sewer of London."

-- Harry Smith

"The hour-long version that can be seen today is but a fragment of the original plan, but even so, it is among the very highest achievements of the American avant-garde cinema..." -- P. Adams Sitney, Visionary Cinema

Robert Breer's RECREATION (56) 1.5 min, BLAZES (61) 3 min, BREATHING (63) 5 1/4 min. "We look at Breer's work and we begin to smile - lightly, inside, a happy sort of smile, a happy feeling like when you see anything beautiful and perfect. It's through an amazing control and economy of his materials that he achieves this; through the elimination of all the usual emotional, personal, biographical material; not by giving in to temptations."

-- Jonas Mekas, The Village Voice



THE PLAGUE SUMMER by Chester Kessler

THURSDAY, MARCH 30

A Salute to Chester Kessler

"PLAGUE SUMMER" AND OTHER FILMS
CHESTER KESSLER IN PERSON

It is always a great occasion when an artist who, for any number of reasons, has absented himself from the medium for a number of years all of a sudden feels compelled to return and heeds the call of his muse. Sustained work in the film medium certainly takes a great deal of courage and with this program, a retrospective, covering a period of twenty-four years, we wish to honor that courage present in the works as well as their maker, Chester Kessler.

THE PLAGUE SUMMER (51) 30min. Originally conceived in 1945 as a 35mm slide-film this cartoon film was later rephotographed in 16mm with narration by the filmmaker and added sound effects. Adapted from Kenneth Patchen's novel, THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT, the film is a series of tableaux recording the journey of six allegorical characters through landscapes brutalized by war. "Drawn with extraordinary imagination": Lewis Jacobs, Experiment in the Film

COLUMBARIUM (73) 17min. "An uncritical valentine to the San Francisco Coliseum, surely one of the most bizarre and beautiful buildings in the city." (Electronic music by Warner Jepson)

RONDO (76) 25min. "Another valentine, this one to Huntington Square, an oasis on Nob Hill...and a playground for pigeons, children and fountain statuary...The film was cut to Lou Harrison's Suite for Violin, Piano & Small Orchestra. A 12 minute version was shown at the San Francisco International Film Festival in 1976 and received an Honorable Mention.

GO (76) 13min. "Hippies, authentic and otherwise, dancing to rock bands in Golden Gate Park...edited to recordings of rock bands and arranged in a reversed-time sequence, 1974-1969. For me, this material now has an elegiac quality." (program notes by Chester Kessler)

SUNDAY, APRIL 2

Translations from Billy Bitzer

"TOM, TOM, THE PIPER'S SON"
AND "INTOLERANCE (ABRIDGED)"

These two films have in common that they were both originally photographed by D.W. Griffith's cameraman, G.W. ("Billy") Bitzer. The footage was then taken and manipulated via optical printer and rephotography according to the sensibilities of the latter-day filmmakers.

TOM, TOM, THE PIPER'S SON (1969) 115 min. by Ken Jacobs
"Ken Jacobs took this old movie and translated it into the modern film sensibilities. He rephotographed it, dissected it image by image, frame by frame, detail by detail, and came up with a movie of his own, seventy-five minutes long. He achieved two things: he created a film of a much greater visual and formal impact than the original; and he set up a precedent of "film translation". As far as the qualities of this film go, I have already stated, on other occasions, that I consider it a tour de force. The "film translation" aspect opens unlimited possibilities." -- Jonas Mekas, The Village Voice

INTOLERANCE (ABRIDGED) (8 min.) by Standish Lawder
The film was created on a home-made optical printer automatically programmed to double print every twenty-sixth frame. The resulting condensation of the original is a blitz of images which, despite their velocity, still conveys the essence of Griffith's narrative line, composition, editing, and even camerawork.

THURSDAY, APRIL 6

KRISTINA TALKING PICTURES

YVONNE RAINER IN PERSON

Yvonne Rainer had long been a choreographer of renown before turning her talents to the film medium. Her previous films, LIVES OF THE PERFORMERS and FILM ABOUT A WOMAN WHO... have earned her a position of considerable importance as a true innovator as a maker of dramatic films.

KRISTINA TALKING PICTURES (76) 90min. "Is a narrative film inasmuch as it contains a series of events that can be synthesized into a story if one is disposed to do so. (For example, a European liontamer comes to America and takes up choreography.) The film can also be viewed in terms of its discursions from a strict narrative line via reflections on art, love, and catastrophe sustained by the voices of Kristina, the heroine-narrator, and Raoul, her lover.

KRISTINA TALKING PICTURES circles in a narrowing spiral toward its primary concerns: the uncertain relation of public act to personal fate, the ever-present possibility for disparity between public-directed conscience and private will.

Having just put your check to Amnesty International into the mailbox, you are mugged...or discover you have cancer...or perhaps you betray an old friend. Nothing can ensure that we remain honorable, nor save us from betrayal and death"

"In its multi-levelled disjointed style, KRISTINA TALKING PICTURES may seem to revive the lessons of Duchamp, the Cubists, even the epic, to create a melodrama for our time, one that speaks to the fractured sensibility of anyone living in the difficult world of modern urban culture." Ruby Rich--Chicago Reader

"Yvonne Rainer's KRISTINA TALKING PICTURES may very well be the most important film since Michael Snow's WAVELENGTH appeared in 1967." --Amy Taubin, "Soho Weekly News"

SUNDAY, APRIL 9

FUND RAISER NIGHT

Tati's MR. HULOT'S HOLIDAY

TWO SHOWS--7 PM AND 9 PM

Nearly six years have passed since Jacques Tati's superb early comedies were last seen in the United States. Audiences have had a chance to see both TRAFFIC and the 3 hour PLAYTIME, tragically recut for U.S. distribution, at various Bay Area theatres, but the seminal MR. HULOT'S HOLIDAY, which served as the model for them, went out of release in the early 1970's. It has finally returned to distribution in the last few weeks, and in the meantime a whole young generation have never seen Tati's early work. The great actor-director was immediately recognized as a master of comedy of equal stature with Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd from the time he made his first feature JOUR DE FETE in 1949. MR. HULOT'S HOLIDAY was Tati's second film, a work of almost exclusively visual comedy for which he first created the character of Mr. Hulot, a loquacious average oddball who seems to be followed by complications everywhere he goes - in this case, on vacation to a resort hotel. Jacques Tati's gift for mime and his early music hall training have made it possible to tell a tall tale while dispensing almost entirely with words, as MR. HULOT'S HOLIDAY demonstrates to perfection. Welcome back to San Francisco, Mr. Hulot!

Also on tonight's program - Curt McDowell's WIENERS AND BUNS MUSICAL. "WIENERS AND BUNS MUSICAL really is a musical, a domestic musical, with songs, and with a housewife heroine named Trixie (Ainslie Pryor) who dresses like a Dorothy Lamour South-Sea Islander and yearns for something better - specifically, her lover rather than her husband (George Kuchar)...it earns its grades - pretty good grades - as much for depth of impudence as for range of invention." --New York Times

THURSDAY, APRIL 13

AMERICARTOON

TIM BLASKOVITCH IN PERSON

AMERICARTOON (77) 86min "Is a non-narrative exploration of the United States from the perspective of America's most self-conscious symbol--the automobile. A stunning aerial sequence assembled from NASA outer space footage and a succession of short shots taken from a jet brings the viewer to the starting point of the film, the Golden Gate Bridge. Then the film opens into a vast circular tour of America's physical and social landscape: the starkness of the Southwest, the softness of the South, then the various energies of the Atlantic states and the lushness of New England, across the Midwest and Great Plains states to the majestic West. These images are joined with a simplicity and precision that evokes a lyrical feeling, a montage based in reality yet dreamlike in execution. The drama of the experience is in the continuous motion and the visual strength of the imagery...The soundtrack is an original musical score by Chicago composer Philip Gonzales. With his use of a variety of themes, textures and instruments, Gonzales' dynamic arrangement performs an integrating element of high order to the imagery, and very much enhances the continuity of the work as a whole."

--CINEARTH

Also on this program: AN AFTERNOON IN IOWA CITY 3min.

SUNDAY, APRIL 16

Hollis Frampton: Early Films

HOLLIS FRAMPTON IN PERSON

This spring we will mark Hollis Frampton's annual visit with two shows. We will start off this week's visit with a showing of his earlier work, much of which will be seen in the Bay Area for the first time. Of this early work P. Adams Sitney wrote in 1970, "His films resemble logical hypotheses, propositions, and ultimately paradoxes. They are more intellectual than any films within the American avant-garde since Sidney Peterson's...To begin with, he has cut the Gordian knot; for if the past twenty-five years have seen the subversion of narrative through the psychology, mythology, and finally metaphysics of the irrational, Frampton has turned upon that recent evolution with a rationality previously unheard of in cinema.

"He has become incredibly prolific, like Brakhage and Warhol in their most radical periods. The speed and quantity of his production dramatizes his aesthetic thrust, as each film he makes qualifies, contradicts or engulfs all that he has done before...Right now he is working on several fronts, creating visual polemics, and discovering his style. The great polemical statements in art are produced by men at the beginning of their careers, not by the aging masters. There is an exhilaration in what Frampton makes even when he misses his mark; an understanding of his successes and failures is an understanding of what is most important in film today."

Included on this program will be the following films:
MANUAL OF ARMS (66) 17min. PALINDROME (69) 22min.
MAXWELL'S DEMON (68) 4min. LEMON (69) 8min.
SURFACE TENSION (68) 10min. ARTIFICIAL LIGHT (69) 25min.

Open Screening: Except in the case of programs presented by the filmmaker him/herself or exceptionally long shows, all films are welcome for open screening after the scheduled program. To submit a film for open screening, please bring it to the projection booth before the show begins.



Hollis Frampton by Michael Chikiris

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

New Films from the Magellan Cycle

HOLLIS FRAMPTON IN PERSON

For over seven years Hollis Frampton has been at work on a prodigious work of a protracted length of 36 hrs. As the films which comprise this work known as the MAGELLAN CYCLE appear the Cinematheque hopes to accommodate them. This evening's program will include at least three new films from this cycle: OTHERWISE UNEXPLAINED FIRES, BIRTH OF MAGELLAN part I; MINDFALL and MAGELLAN'S FIRST DREAM.

For those unfamiliar with Frampton's intent for the MAGELLAN CYCLE we quote from his 1974 "Statement of Plans": "I began work, nearly four years ago, upon a project that is subsumed under the synoptic explication of a single metaphor. When it is complete, it will constitute a 'serial' or long work in installments, using the elements of peripeteia and discovery customary to the serial mode. The central conceit of the work derives from the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan, first circumnavigator of the world, as detailed in the diary of his passenger, Antonio Pigafetta, and elsewhere. During his 5-year voyage, Magellan trespasses (alive and dead) upon every psycholinguistic 'time-zone,' circumambulating the whole of human experience as a kind of somnambulist. He returns home, a carcass pickled in cloves, as an exquisite corpse."

SUNDAY, APRIL 23

Kurt Kren: Films

Malcolm LeGrice has been telling us for years that the films of Kurt Kren are at least as important as those of his fellow countryman who has been getting all the publicity. This will be Kurt Kren's first visit to this country and the first time we on the West Coast have had the opportunity to see his films. We at the Cinematheque have been looking forward with great anticipation to this visit.

"Unlike Kubelka, who has spent much of his time in the USA, Kren remained in Europe and has made films consistently since 1957, to date completing about thirty 16mm works. Again compared to Kubelka, his works are more involved and varied, initiating a wider variety of formal issues and basic philosophical questions. There are broadly three phases in his work. The first is highly systematic; the second, beginning about 1964, is no less formal, but works in relationship to the Material-Actions of Otto Muehl and Gunter Brus, bringing a new set of issues not easily relatable to his formal notions; and the third starts around 1967, where the formal notions are again dominant but often combined with a more expressive or provocative content." -- Malcolm LeGrice



GINO'S PIZZA by Warren Bass

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

GINO'S PIZZA and Other Films

WARREN BASS IN PERSON

Warren Bass is an independent filmmaker whose work ranges from portrait studies to experimental films using optical printing, animation and electronic imagery. His films have won multiple awards at festivals including the Independent Filmmakers Exposition, Sinking Creek and Chicago International. He has also directed experimental theatre Off Broadway and at Lincoln Center and has held the position of Professor of Cinema and Chairman of the Cinema Department at the University of Bridgeport.

GINO'S PIZZA (72) 18min. "Is a slice of the American success myth, served with pepperoni, cheese and tomato sauce. When you visit your local pizza parlor, do you ever stop and chat with the man whose artistic genius is behind each slice? If your answer is 'no', this film will show you what you've been missing."

UNCLE SUGAR'S FLYING CIRCUS (70) 3min. Made without a camera. "Images were put directly onto film through various techniques--press type, hole punches, felt pens--to create a dazzling, rhythmically exploding montage."

CITY VIEW (75) 11min. "Chance choreography of people around a New York subway exit is material for an examination and re-examination of a brief moment in time."

JOSEPH HIRSHORN PORTRAIT (77) 20min. "A portrait of the art collector and of his sculpture collection as it existed on his estate in Connecticut shortly before it was given to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C."

Also included on this program will be a premiere of a new film.

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

Palo Alto Film Festival

PRIZE WINNERS

The Palo Alto Film Festival is at this time the largest and most comprehensive film festival specializing in films from Northern California. While there is no way to foresee which films will appear on the program, it must be noted that all of the films on this program will be by local and regional filmmakers. There will be one film by a student working in Super 8 plus the winners in the Super 8 and 16mm categories. The titles of the winning films will be available one week prior to the showing.

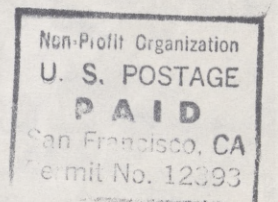
Also on this program will be a dramatic film in Super 8, TERMINAL (40 min.) by James Piper of Fresno City College, author of Personal Filmmaking. TERMINAL deals with the plight of an unsatisfied woman who decides to change her life. It won awards from the American Photographic Society for Best Sound and Best Screenplay.

Clive Dodge, director of the Palo Alto Film Festival, will be present to introduce the show and to answer questions.

To receive our posters in the mail, send your name, address and zip code to: Cinematheque Mailing List/Foundation for Art in Cinema/339 Head St./San Francisco, CA 94132

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